DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 265 193 TM 860 047

AUTHOR Leles, Sam
TITLE Using Techniques of Qualitative Research to Study and Analyze Program Designs.
PUB DATE Nov 85
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association (13th, Biloxi, MS, November 6-8, 1985).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Basic Skills; *Curriculum Design; *Curriculum Evaluation; *Curriculum Research; *Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; Field Studies; Graduate Students; Higher Education; Instructional Design; Instructional Program Divisions; *Program Design
IDENTIFIERS *Qualitative Research

ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the fit between program elements described in curriculum texts that are used to identify program designs and those elements of a program used in classroom settings to teach or implement a program. A secondary purpose was to identify and describe qualitative research techniques that are usable to analyze, classify and assess program or curriculum designs. Ten graduate students (all educational practitioners) provided the researcher a written report that included the data used for this study. The students identified and selected a scholastic program for investigation and spent approximately one month studying the program of their choice. Programs were classified into one of five designs or program configurations: (1) the specified competency design; (2) the discipline/subject matter design; (3) the social activities and problem design; (4) the process skills design; and (5) the individual needs and interest design. Students also identified the curriculum elements they used to characterize that program. The researcher established the accuracy of students' curriculum classification and discussed and critiqued the written reports. Results show that different programs can be accurately analyzed and assessed by educational practitioners. (LMO)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED265193

Discussion Session
MSERA
November 7, 1985
2:30 p.m., Thursday
Caprice Room, Biloxi Hilton Hotel
Biloxi, Mississippi

USING TECHNIQUES OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH TO STUDY AND ANALYZE PROGRAM DESIGNS

By

Sam Leles

Professor, College of Education
University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa

1985

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Leles, S.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

TM 840 047

Using Techniques of Qualitative Research To
Study and analyze Program Designs

By

Sam Leles
Professor, College of Education
University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa

This study is the second in a series of studies in which program designs were examined, classified and critiqued. Three intents were served in conducting this study. First, the study represented an effort to provide educational practitioners enrolled in graduate study, field work experiences in which they examined, analyzed, and assessed program or curriculum designs. Second, an attempt was made to determine whether or not the elements described in texts that label curriculum designs portray accurately the selected program design taught in given educational settings. Thirdly, this study was conducted to demonstrate how qualitative techniques of research are used to study, classify, and assess curriculum or program designs.

Program or curriculum design describes the configuration or the orientation of a particular program. It also refers to the particular framework or to the pattern of learning opportunities described in a program. While the relationships between learning opportunities and the specific students or groups of students is not always explicitedly evident, it is, however, always present when new programs are conceived or existing programs are modified and proposed for adoption. This is because programs or curricula have their roots in considerations identified with the nature,

purpose and destiny of man (Doll, 1978).

While all programs are conceived and developed in terms of four basic considerations; that is, goals, content, method, and evaluation, it is the weight or emphasis given to any one and at times two, of these four components that helps characterize any specific program. For example, the discipline/subject matter design is a program whose major focus is on the subject matter or knowledge or the content used to build that program. That design differs obviously from the social activities and problem design (sometimes known as the reconstructionist design) because here the content used in the program is associated with topics, issues, cultural contradictions and the like, rather than being derived from organized bodies of traditional subject matter. Furthermore, the social activities and problem design is one whose goals or purposes are likely to be stated in terms of outcomes associated with the growth and development of the student. Content identified for use in a social activities and problem design is also difficult to pre-determine and prescribe beyond relatively short periods of time. The characteristics and needs of particular groups of students in particular settings, and for particular times, govern or dictate the sequence for this curriculum or program design. Another example that illustrates the differences in focus upon program components, that is, goals, content, method, and evaluation, are those commonly associated with the program labeled the process skills design. The process skills design which is more widely known as the humanistic

curriculum, places emphasis upon method rather than upon content. In this design, the focus is on structured socialization mechanisms to attain or reach the goals and objectives of the program. Because of this, the process skill design requires very significant changes in measurement and evaluative practices. Conventional achievement testing is not very useful for the process skill design.

Purposes and Procedures

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the fit between program elements described in curriculum texts that are used to identify program designs and those elements of a program used in classroom settings to teach or implement a program. A secondary purpose of the study was to identify and describe qualitative research techniques that are usable to analyze, classify and assess program or curriculum designs.

For this study, programs were identified, differentiated, and classified into one of the following five designs or program configurations; (1) the specific competency design, (2) the discipline/subject matter design, (3) the social activities and problem design, (4) the process skills design, and (5) the individual needs and interest design. Important program elements and characteristics of each design were identified, described, and discussed in three of the 14 three-hour class sessions in the introductory curriculum course. Graduate students enrolled in this course also were provided detailed hand-out materials about each of the five designs and each student had, as a basic

resource, the text used in this introductory curriculum course. The first four chapters of the course text described and explained program designs or as McNeil refers to them, "prevailing conceptions of curriculum" (McNeil, 1981). The writer of this paper thinks that program designs or conceptions of curriculum can be sorted out into five categories whereas McNeil uses four categories. Some curriculum writers, meanwhile, use a categorical system based on three classes of programs; that is, (1) the subject centered designs, (2) the learner centered designs and (3) the problem centered designs (Oliver, 1969; Zais, 1976).

Differences in the way program designs or conceptions or configurations are conceived was a matter of important concern to the researcher. In class sessions, deliberate efforts were made to teach the graduate students the five categories of program designs. Characteristics of each design were emphasized in the learning and advantages and disadvantages of each design were stressed to students enrolled in the introductory curriculum course. In addition to providing class participants with a variety of supplementary hand-out materials, two exercises were used during several class sessions. Student responses to their exercises provided information that helped the researcher establish whether or not each student in class had adequately learned the appropriate terminology associated with each of the five designs. Also, the measures established whether or not each of the ten students in class was knowledgeable about the

characteristics and elements of each of the five curriculum designs. Instructional feedback data showed that all ten graduate students had achieved to the extent that each could conduct the assigned field project of identifying a program in operation in some scholastic setting, then study it in several ways, and finally analyze and assess it according to pre-determined directions. Each of the ten graduate students provided the researcher a written report that included the data used for this study.

Participants

The ten graduate students who secured data for this study were all parctitioners. Five of the ten were classroom teachers and of these, two taught in junior colleges, one taught in secondary school, and the other two were elementary classroom teachers. The remaining five participants, who also were practitioners, worked in educational settings that were distinctly different. One was a national supervisor with the ministry of education for a Central American nation. Three worked in a nearby metropolitan area and of these, one was a teacher of gifted children, one was a high school counselor and one was a system-wide elementary supervisor. The other or remaining person was an assistant football coach at a major state university. This person's responsibilities included coordinating and directing a strength building program for male students. Some students were engaged in competitive sports and some were not. Of the 10 participants, six were females and four were

males. Table 1 shows the age distribution for the 10 graduate students participating in this study.

Table 1

DISTRIBUTION OF AGE WITHIN THE GROUP (N-10) THAT EXAMINATED PROGRAMS AND OBSERVED CLASSES

Distribution of Age For Practitioners	Average Age	Median Age
29 1		
31 3		
32 1	34.3	32.50
33 1		
36 1		
40 1		
41 1		
42 1		

In addition to the age of the participants, the years of educational experience for each participant was identified. Table 2 described the number of years of experience associated with this group of practitioners.

Table 2

YEARS OF EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN THE GROUP

Years of Educational Experience in the Group (N-10)	Average Years Experience	Median Years Experience
4 1		
7 2		
8 1	11.2	9.5
9 1		
10 1		
12 1		
16 1		
19 1		
20 1		

While the group appeared to be rather youthful in age, there was considerable educational experience within the group as shown in Table 2.

Findings

Each of the ten graduate students, after having identified and selected a scholastic program for investigation, spent approximately one month studying the program of their choice. This included examining course texts and curriculum guides, examinations and other tests, making classroom observations and conducting interviews with teachers, supervisors and administrators. Each of the 10 participants in the study classified the program they studied and identified the curriculum elements they used to characterize that program. Table 3 identified the ten different programs which were analyzed and categorized into three different designs.

Table 3
Design Classifications for Ten Curricula

Program or Curriculum Design	Grade Level and Substantive Knowledge Identified With Each Program
Specific Competency Design	Elementary (Grade 3) . . . Reading & Math
	Elementary (Grade 3) . . . Language Arts
	Health, Physical Education (University, Undergrad). . Physical Conditioning
	Post-Secondary . . . . . Chemical Technology
	Elementary (Grades 4-6). . Physical Education
Discipline/Subject Matter Design	Secondary (Grades 11 & 12). Advanced Placement American History
	Post-Secondary . . . . . Non-Credit English
	Elementary (Grade 6) . . . Science & Social Studies
	Post-Secondary . . . . . Spanish
Social Activities and Problems Design	Secondary (Grades 9-12) . . Career Education

The researcher established the accuracy of classifications by the way in which program elements were identified, discussed and critiqued in the written report each student submitted. Using the five category scheme described earlier in this paper, Table 3 identified the way each program was classified and showed the grade level(s) and substantive knowledge or skills for each program. Table 3 showed that the ten different programs were classified into three designs. Two of the three designs included programs with basic skill content. Of the four basic skills programs (two elementary, grade 3; one elementary, grades 4-6; and one post-secondary, non-credit English), three were based on language arts content while one was based on skill elements associated with physical education. Of the ten programs, only one, the career education program made direct and express reference to affect outcomes. The Spanish course inferred affect developments through references to cultural learnings derived from studying Spanish. However, neither program identified instruments and/or measurement procedures that suggested affect assessments.

Insert Table 4 about here

As a qualitative field study, this investigation tried to secure an accurate description of program elements used to characterize curricula that are commonly implemented in schools. Therefore each of the 10 programs was analyzed to see whether or not particular curriculum designs included all, some

Table 4
Designs Suggested By Component Elements Used
To Develop Programs or Curricula

Program Components	Program Elements That Characterize Particular Designs: Specific Competency	Discipline Subject Matter	Social Activities & Problems
PURPOSES OBJECTIVES AND GOALS SUB-GOALS	Pre-determined behavioral skills (modualar, hierarchical) Basic skills for 32 job tasks so as to function as chem technician Measurable, sequenced increments of learning Behavioral stated skill learnings in math/reading Behavioral skills-low level cognition, modular	Development of critical thinking cognition at 3.0 to 6.0 levels Reading skills in non-credit post-secondary courses Continuum of logical established scope-sequence, obj. stated in terms of factual knowledge Language skills for talking, reading Spanish, developmental simple to complex	Outcomes stated as increasing awareness of career options and in acquiring knowledge about occupations. Focus on attitudinal development, appreciation and interest.
CONTENT KNOWLEDGE SUBJECT MATTER MATERIALS EXPERIENCES	Logical, pre-determined sport skills and games (perf. based) Lab manual material for chemical technician (empirically derived tasks-simple, complex) Logically prescribed commercial machines for phy. & strength dev. Logical, pre-det. skills mastered in sequence Logical, pre-det. skills mastered at 1.0 and 2.0 cogitive levels	Varied, adv. placement content, films, video cassettes Commercially det. grammar, sentence construction, paragraph development Commercially det. science and social studies topics/problems Highly structured and logically det. knowledge about Spanish culture	Career education blended into every subject offered, grade 9-12, with one structured unit in gr. 10 English. Intent is on interest and aptitude but prog. at discretion of individ. teacher. Program has no planned continuity or sequence and is developed, Ad Hoc.
ORGANIZING EXPERIENCES ACTIVITIES TECHNIQUES STRATEGIES METHODS	Practice, drill, feedback (reinforced) in group setting, when learning difficulties occur, then individual attention Lab. work, some lecture and self-directed study Individualized prog. for phy. dev. Small group work, peer and tutorial work, individualized Limited individual. work-mostly programed for group	Field work assign. reading, analyzing documents, class presentations, doing research Lecture, class discussion with limited small group work Group or class teaching thru lecture and class discussion Teacher demonstration, test exercises, lecture, class discussion	Some invited speakers, film strips, class disc. with career counseling and library resource options. Research paper requirement for each student in gr. 10 English class.
EVALUATION GRADING TESTING MEASUREMENT JUDGING	Rating-satisfactory-unsatisfactory, written pre/post, self-test and observations Formative feedback used to modify program for individual needs Criterial pre/post-commercial tests Teacher developmen. crit. ref. tests	Teacher dev. obj. and essay tests. Cognitive dev. thru use of many essay tests Teacher dev. crit. ref. tests (formative and summative) Teacher dev. obj. Type tests only (summative) Conventional, commercial cognitive achievement tests (Norm ref.)	Emphasis on cognitive information associated with different vocations. No attempt to assess affect developments of interest and awareness.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

or none of the characteristics or elements ascribed to each by curricularists and theorists (Posner, 1974; Mitchell and Spady, 1978; Posner, 1982; Everwijn, 1983). An examination of Table 4 revealed that when programs are implemented in schools, some programs include all elements of a design as prescribed in the literature. In other instances programs are modified so as to include some characteristics from one design and still other characteristics or elements from other designs. In this study the program whose goals were to teach reading skills to post-secondary students on a non-credit basis, was classifed a discipline/subject matter design. Yet this program, which is housed in the humanities division of a junior college, shows evaluations being derived from formative and summative criterion referenced tests. These type tests typically are identified with specific competency programs. The Spanish program reported in this study also reveals some design disparities. This program is classified as discipline/subject design. Yet the goals of this program are stated in terms of skills which is typically a characteristic of specific competency programs. In addition, the content and methods of this program include elements again closely identified with specific competency programs. Meanwhile the evaluation component for this program uses commercially developed, norm referenced achievement tests, characteristic of the discipline/subject matter design.

Conclusion and Discussion

There were two purposes in this study. First, a five category scheme for classifying program designs was used to determine whether or not planned and prescribed program configurations vary when implemented in school settings. Second, a variety of qualitative techniques of research were used to demonstrate how qualitative research practices can be applied to this type investigation.

The results of this study show that different programs can be accurately analyzed and assessed by educational practitioners. The results suggest that the specific competency design is the design whose fit, when implemented, corresponds most closely to the characteristics identified with it in texts and in the literature. The findings in this study also indicate that educational practitioners may start out using a traditional discipline/subject matter design program which is then modified to include elements from other designs. The current emphases upon accountability, basic skills, and performanced based developments in schooling are readily adaptable to discipline/subject matter (sometimes called academic subject matter) designs which are best known and understood both by professional educators and by the public in general.

This study, like the previous one (Leles, 1984), shows that few programs, regardless of design or orientation, include affective goals or objectives. Furthermore, if a program calls for affect developments, it is still unlikely that tests and other

instrumentation or procedures will be prescribed to conduct affect assessments. Finally, classroom teachers continue to demonstrate considerable knowledge and skill in adapting programs and program designs to suit the immediate learning and teaching demands imposed upon schools and teachers.

As a qualitative field study, this investigation used a non-representative sample to secure varieties of nominal information. This information, in turn, was gained by examining and studying text sources, curriculum guides and tests. Interviews were conducted with some school personnel and observations also provided data for the study (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982).

The findings of this study continue to show that questions as to which program design is more effective or superior, are not really answerable at this time. Not only do we need more advanced research techniques before such questions can be accurately investigated, but we need considerably more studies that identify, describe and disclose the multitude of developments that distinguish program planning from program implementation.

References

Bodgan, Robert C. and Sari Knopp Biken. Qualitative Research For Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1982), pp. 1-233.

Doll, Ronald C. Curriculum Improvement: Decision Making and Process. Fourth Edition (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1978), p. 151.

Everwijn, S.E.M. "Organization and Intergration of Learning Experiences in a Curriculum: A Case Study," Journal of Curriculum Studies. Vol. 15 (April-June, 1983), p. 1, 2.

Leles, Sam. "Using Program Design To Meet Individual Needs: A Qualitative Analysis of Selected Field Based Curricula," Paper presented at Annual Meeting of Mid-South Educational Research Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, November 14, 1984.

McNeil, John D. Curriculum: A Comprehensive Introduction. 2nd Edition (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1981), pp. 3-74.

Mitchell, Douglas E. and William G. Spady, "Organizational Contexts for Implementing Outcome Based Education," Educational Researcher. Vol. 7 (July-August, 1978). pp. 9-17.

Oliver, Albert I. Curriculum Improvement: A Guide To Problems, Principals, and Procedures. (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1969), p. 323; pp. 331-332.

Posner, George. "The Extensiveness of Curriculum Structure: A Conceptual Scheme," Review of Educational Research. Vol. 44 (Fall, 1974), pp. 401-407.

Posner, George. "A Cognitive Science Conception of Curriculum and Instruction," Journal of Curriculum Studies. Vol. 14 (Octobert-December, 1982), pp. 343-351.

Zais, Robert S. Curriculum: Principles and Foundations. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1976), p. 396.